Self-Realization Fellowship

Founded in 1920 by Paramahansa Yogananda

March 9, 2016

Mr. Keith Cordwell
47 Chipping Hill
Witham Essex CM8 2JT
England, UK

Dear One,

It is a special joy to welcome you as a new student of Paramahansa Yogananda's Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons. The lives of countless devotees who have preceded you on this path proclaim how much the practice of these teachings can mean in coping with the often painful and frustrating challenges imposed on every being in this world of change and contrasts. As darkness flees before the dawn, so does sorrow disappear when we consciously, lovingly turn to God.

Paramahansa Yogananda taught and demonstrated the truth that God can be known personally by divine communion. Realization of God is the only perfect answer to all problems. As you learn in the Self-Realization Lessons the science of meditation, and use it regularly with devotion, your life will undergo a spiritual transformation. Awareness of God will steal into your heart, filling you with joy, harmony, and divine love.

Since it is not possible for me to welcome every devotee in person, please receive this letter as my warm greeting to you in the name of God and Guru. I offer on your behalf my earnest prayers for your steady progress in Self-realization.

Whenever you wish guidance in your practice of the teachings, please contact us here at the Mother Center. Our spiritual counselors will be glad to serve you.

May God and the Gurus of Self-Realization Fellowship bless and guide you.

In divine love and friendship,

Mrinalini Mata

Sri Mrinalini Mata

SRI MRINALINI MATA, PRESIDENT
INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS: 3880 SAN RAFAEL AVENUE, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90065-3219
TEL: (323) 225-2471 • FAX: (323) 225-5088 • www.yogananda-srf.org
IN INDIA: YOGODA SATSANGA SOCIETY OF INDIA

Self-Realization Fellowship

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Dear Friend,

Attached is your Self-Realization Fellowship student card, which will admit you to technique review classes and other events that are held for Self-Realization Fellowship students.

Mr. Keith Cordwell
47 Chipping Hill
Witham Essex CM8 2JT
England, UK

When communicating with us, we ask that you please use your reference number (shown at the bottom of your student card).

In divine friendship,
Self-Realization Fellowship

Instructions to Assemble Laminated Card:
- Carefully peel off both sides of the card below.
- Fold back sides together to adhere.

LESSONS STUDENT
SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP

Keith Cordwell

is a student of the *Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons* and is entitled to all privileges accorded to students.

Self-Realization Fellowship Church
Founded by Paramahansa Yogananda

Sri Mrinalini Mata, *President*

Mar 9, 2016 137-260-883

STUDENT PLEDGE

"I vow that I am undertaking this study in a spirit of deepest sincerity. I realize that, in order to progress spiritually, I should study the *Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons* faithfully and should practice the techniques attentively and regularly.

"I promise not to reveal to others these private instructions and scientific principles and techniques. Instead I will refer inquirers to the Mother Center, that they may receive these teachings direct from international headquarters in Los Angeles."

SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP CHURCH
International Headquarters, Los Angeles, California

Self-Realization Fellowship was founded in 1920 by Paramahansa Yogananda and incorporated as a church in the State of California in 1935.

Easter 2016

"Bless us this morning, O Christ, that we may realize the universal significance of thy resurrection: that our souls, reflections of Christ Consciousness, be resurrected in thine Immortal Consciousness evermore."
—Paramahansa Yogananda

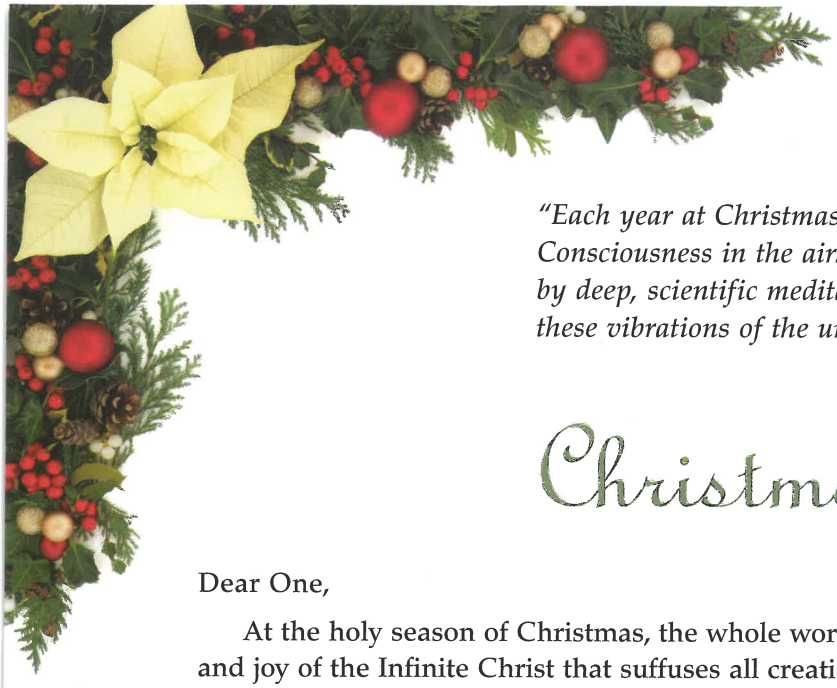
Dear One,

Easter greetings to you, with much joy from the ashrams of Paramahansa Yogananda! He taught us to reverence the Easter message of resurrection as an eternal affirmation for all of God's children that no matter how dark the storm clouds in this troubled world, we have the power to rise above them into a vaster consciousness of God's light and glory.

Avatars such as the blessed Lord Jesus incarnate to show us by their example how to live divinely amidst the dualities of creation. They have faced the obstructing forces of *maya*, as we all must do, and have conquered. Outwardly Christ's crucifixion seemed an ignominious defeat. But like a brilliant shaft of radiance piercing the darkness, his resurrection was a glorious victory not only over death, but symbolically over all mortal limitations — a victory that continues to illumine for receptive souls the truth that we are not these bodies, but divine beings irrevocably endowed with Spirit's immortality, joy, and love.

The holy days of the Easter season are replete with poignant reminders of the divine drama played by Jesus for the lasting encouragement and upliftment of the entire human family. Our guru, Paramahansaji, wrote: "Jesus knew that through his resurrection the omnipotence of God was to be revealed, while his crucifixion would exemplify the humbleness of God who wants to teach His ignorant, rebellious children by love only." Easter, if celebrated according to its true spiritual significance, is therefore a time for greatest joy, for realizing anew that a divinely joy-filled life is the result of practicing resurrection daily — in our attitudes, actions, and the way we relate to others. Because we live in an imperfect world, it is easy to dwell unduly on the flaws in others, in society, and in oneself. But if we look for good, do good, and try to bring out the good in the diverse circumstances we encounter, we connect our daily lives with the redeeming power of God's love in this world — the all-pervading Christ Consciousness.

All of us have our particular crosses to bear, but how we choose to bear them determines their effect on us. Jesus Christ's true victory was the love and forgiveness he showed on the cross. Likewise in our own lives, experiences that the ego rebels against can be liberating for the soul. When the pride of the "little I" is crucified, we have an opportunity to learn peace-giving humility. When others are unkind, we can conquer the ego's impulses by giving kindness and understanding. If the body has trouble and we react with courage and evenminded faith in God's will, we can draw forth the heroic nature of the soul, and deepen through trustful surrender our relationship with Him. We always have the power to choose light over darkness. The choices we make can transmute our crosses into instruments of our perfection, the resurrection of the ever-blissful soul from its tomb of mortal consciousness.



"Each year at Christmastime there are strong vibrations of Christ Consciousness in the air. Those who are attuned by their devotion and by deep, scientific meditation will receive in their own consciousness these vibrations of the universal consciousness that was in Christ Jesus."

—Paramahansa Yogananda

Christmas 2016

Dear One,

At the holy season of Christmas, the whole world is blessed more tangibly with the radiant love and joy of the Infinite Christ that suffuses all creation. I pray it may illumine your life with renewed hope, and with faith in the potency of God's goodness and love, which is ever exerting its uplifting, harmonizing influence upon receptive hearts. May our joyous celebration of the birth of Jesus, in whom the universal Christ Consciousness was fully manifested, rouse in us all the realization that we too are born of God's light, endowed with the capacity to reflect His limitless consciousness and power of love in this world.

The omnipotence of that divine consciousness is apparent in the lives of all the Great Ones whom God sends to lead His children back to Him. But they also express His gentleness, His compassion and infinitely loving care for every soul. Jesus used his power to help rather than dominate others; to humbly serve those in physical or spiritual need instead of seeking to be served. The universal message of his life is that God is love, and that the very essence of Christ Consciousness is love. His birth as one of us was truly a divine gift to all humanity—showing us the way of humility, selflessness, and unconditional love that leads to eternal fulfillment of our souls' glorious divine potential. To cultivate those Christlike qualities, and thus to enlarge the horizons of our minds and hearts, is a gift we can give him in return; and thereby participate on a deeper level in the spiritual celebration of his birth. "Christ is born in the cradle of tenderness," Guruji reminded us. "Greater than the destructive force of hate is the compassionate power of love. Whatever you say or do to others, let it be with love. Harm no one. Judge no other. Hate none, love all; behold Christ in all. Whatever blessings you have, desire that all should have." Each soul who practices these principles knows fulfillment of the promise angelically proclaimed at the first Christmas: peace and goodwill in his or her own life, to be shared with all the world.

To experience fully the boundless Christ-love in which Jesus lived, we need to drink from the wellspring of fulfillment that sustained him. Take time this Christmas to go deep into the sacred silence within, to seek in meditation and inner communion the fountain of divine love and joy that flows eternally from the One who is the Source of your being. As its healing waters wash away the barriers of separateness, you will make room to receive the Infinite Christ into your expanding consciousness. May the grace and blessings of that divine glory pour into your heart this Christmas and overflow in the desire to share your joy with others as part of your limitless Self.

Wishing you and your dear ones a Christmas filled with God's light and love,

Mrinalini Mata

Sri Mrinalini Mata

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Self-Realization Fellowship

Founded in 1920 by Paramahansa Yogananda

"With the beginning of the New Year, let us with concentrated resolve and spiritual determination enter into a new era of our lives."

—Paramahansa Yogananda

New Year 2017

Dear One,

A heartfelt thank-you to our dear spiritual family for your many kindnesses during the Christmas season and throughout the year. All of us in Gurudeva Paramahansa Yogananda's ashrams deeply appreciate your thoughtfulness and divine friendship, and your dedication to the universal ideals he taught. Know that by everything you do to express those principles of love and truth, you are contributing to the happiness and upliftment of those around you and bringing more of God's light into this world. Our prayers are with you that He may guide and bless you in carrying out your noble resolves throughout the year ahead.

The dawn of a new year, and the momentum for positive change it brings, encourages us to explore the vast yet undiscovered potentials of our souls. It is an opportunity to revitalize our noblest aspirations and seek with greater zeal and enthusiasm to manifest them. An exhilarating sense of freedom, of renewed resolve, energizes our being when we realize that we need not be defined by the past but can choose to transform ourselves through our own sincere efforts and God's ever-present help.

More powerful than your karma and habits is the potency of your thoughts and will, when they are focused on the ennobling goals you have chosen. Envision and affirm what you want to accomplish, with confidence that you can blaze new trails of positive, creative thought and action that will lead to success. Gurudeva reminded us, "Let nothing weaken your conviction that you can be whatever you want to be. There is no one obstructing you unless it be yourself." He taught us to erase from our consciousness the thought of "I can't," and rouse the divine conqueror within to make the determined daily efforts that prove "I *can*." The valiant soul knows no defeat, only different stages of victory. Even if there are times when outwardly you do not see results, never be discouraged. Guruji said, "If you have done everything you can, that infused mental power will remain with your soul." Each day can be a chance to begin anew, and the present moment is your greatest opportunity to break free of confining patterns — to consciously choose to think and act differently, and through those little victories to bring out the divine image within.

God has endowed us with the ability to change for the better, and therein lies much hope for all of humanity. Your efforts to use your free will rightly are the foundation of your transformation, and no one is more eager than God to help you attain your soul's full potential. Through faithful meditation and living each day in His presence you will discover untold inner resources you can draw upon to rise above the challenges of *maya*. I pray that His wisdom guide you, and His almighty will reinforce your will in each positive endeavor. May the divine love felt in communion with Him continuously charge your self-confidence, and flow through you to others in prayer and in every act of kindness.

Loving wishes to you and your dear ones for a happy and blessed New Year,

Mrinalini Mata

Sri Mrinalini Mata

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Sri Mrinalini Mata, President

International Headquarters: 3880 San Rafael Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90065-3219

Tel: (323) 225-2471 • Fax: (323) 225-5088 • www.yogananda-srf.org

In India: Yogoda Satsanga Society of India

Easter 2017

"O Spirit, command my soul to arise from the sepulcher of littleness into Thy vastness of everywhereness. Lift its matter-caged consciousness into omnipresent freedom in Thee."

—Paramahansa Yogananda

Dear One,

During this blessed Easter season, as you dwell on the inspiration of Christ's divine life and glorious resurrection, may it reawaken within you the memory of your own soul's infinite potential and motivate you to seek with greater zeal the joyous freedom he had won. Never doubt your ability to succeed, for God has endowed us all with the power of mind and will to rise above identification with the body and the tendencies of human nature. He has also given us the example of those like the Lord Jesus who have shown that, though we experience the world's dualities, we need not be dominated by them.

It is our inner environment — whether we choose to live in the spacious freedom and all-inclusiveness of God-awareness, or in the small, cramped quarters of ego consciousness — that determines more than any outer condition the degree of peace, happiness, and soul fulfillment we attain. The liberating message of Easter brings us the reassurance that we are beings of immortal light and joy, and can never be permanently confined in the cocoon of ego consciousness. The Christ Consciousness within us is ever calling us to our own resurrection through our spiritual aspirations, through the universal truths exemplified by God-united souls, and especially through our experiences on the proving grounds of daily life.

Gurudeva referred to resurrection as "the art of emerging from what you are into what you are going to be in the future," and told us: "Every time you give up a weakness and feel happy in being good, Christ is resurrected anew. You can bring Christ Consciousness within you right now...." That divine freedom is gained by many little victories. Christ's reminder to love God with all one's heart, mind, soul, and strength, and one's neighbor as oneself, shows us the way. Communing with God and developing a loving, intimate relationship with Him, such as Jesus had, connects us with the infinite Source of our being. And our human relationships are also meant to expand our consciousness beyond our own needs and wants. Our innate divinity unfolds when — rather than expecting from others — we become givers of love, understanding, and forgiveness. The way of the world is retaliation and endless cycles of retribution; the way of Christ-love is the way that brings healing to our hearts and to others.

The more we meditate deeply and live by Christ-principles, the more we will find the fetters of *maya* and ego dissolving in the glorious, all-fulfilling reality of God's presence. As we resurrect ourselves into that consciousness, and the divine love Jesus expressed flows increasingly through our lives, each of us does our part in resurrecting the influence of God's light in this world.

A blessed and joyous Easter to you and your dear ones,

Sri Mrinalini Mata

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Self-Realization Fellowship

Founded in 1920 by Paramahansa Yogananda

August 4, 2017

Dear Ones,

On August 3, 2017, our beloved Sri Mrinalini Mataji, president and *sanghamata* of Self-Realization Fellowship/Yogoda Satsanga Society of India since 2011, peacefully departed from this world. We will miss her deeply. Yet we would want no sorrow to mar the bliss and freedom she is now experiencing in the heavenly realms, where Guruji has welcomed her with boundless joy and pours out to her his divine love and blessings for the faithfulness with which she fulfilled his trust. She was a pure channel for his teachings and the guidance he wished to convey, chosen by him because of her high spiritual advancement from past lives as his disciple and because he knew she had the wisdom and humility to set self aside, seeking only to please God and Guru.

When great souls such as our Gurudeva Paramahansa Yogananda incarnate on earth for a world mission, God often draws to them close disciples from the past to assist them in their work. Mrinalini Mata was surely such a one. From Guruji's first meeting with Mrinalini Mata when she was only fourteen years old, he recognized that she would play a vital part in spreading the sacred science of Kriya Yoga that he was ordained by God and the Great Ones to bring.

In this quiet, shy young girl, he saw a purity and depth of understanding that would be able to penetrate to the very core of the divinely revealed truths he taught and present them in print with the power and authenticity of his wisdom. He also realized that she had the capacity to be single-heartedly loyal to his ideals and guidance—a disciple to whom he could entrust the polishing of his priceless gems of inspiration, knowing that she would never stray from his meaning but capture its very essence. With great care he trained her personally to succeed Tara Mata in the momentous task of preparing his writings for publication, and to that task she dedicated heart, mind, and soul. All of us who practice Gurudeva's teachings, and the generations of devotees yet to come, owe her an eternal debt of gratitude for the purity of her attunement with him, and her decades of selfless efforts, which have given us such a wealth of his divine wisdom.

With an understanding ever rooted in Gurudeva's vast consciousness, Mrinalini Mataji fulfilled multiple roles during her many years in his ashrams. In addition to her lifetime responsibility for editing Guruji's writings, she served as vice president for many years, working side by side with Sri Daya Mata to aid the growth of Gurudeva's work in the West and India. She had a special place in her heart for Guruji's homeland and rejoiced to see his

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SRI MRINALINI MATA, PRESIDENT
INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS: 3880 SAN RAFAEL AVENUE, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90065-3219
TEL: (323) 225-2471 • FAX: (323) 225-5088 • www.yogananda-srf.org
IN INDIA: YOGODA SATSANGA SOCIETY OF INDIA

"Celebrate the birth of Christ in the cradle of your consciousness during the Christmas season. Let His vast perception in Nature, in space, and in universal love be felt within your heart."

—Paramahansa Yogananda

Christmas 2017

Dear One,

May the light and joy of the holy Christmas season uplift your heart with renewed awareness of God's love, and with faith in its transforming, harmonizing power in your own life and in the world. Each of us can tangibly experience that inward, sacred dimension of this outwardly festive time by making a special effort to open our hearts to the divine qualities exemplified by the beloved Lord Jesus—and especially by meditating deeply, as urged by our guru Paramahansa Yogananda, to receive the universal Christ-love and light in our own consciousness. By uniting our devotion in that effort during this holy season—wherever we may be in this world—we will receive the real blessings of Christmas in the fullest way.

Through Jesus Christ and other great souls, God becomes humanly manifest in this world to share our joys and sorrows, to give us compassionate help in our struggles, and to rouse in us by example the courage and determination to reclaim our own divine heritage. As Guruji told us, "The true celebration of Christmas is the realization in our own consciousness of the birth of Christ Consciousness." This Christmas can be a new beginning for you in awakening from the dream that you are a frail human being to the reality of your soul's innate divinity. Any limiting thoughts and habits that have hindered you are delusive dreams imposed on your consciousness by *maya*. They will be dissolved by the power of your free will and God's grace as you follow patiently and persistently the consciousness-enlarging way of humility, love, and divine communion that Christ and the Great Ones have shown. If you put your trust in God and release fears and worries from your mind and heart, calmness and Christ-peace will flow into your consciousness—bringing inner assurance of God's supporting power and all-healing light. And with each effort you make to radiate love and kindness to others, to see and encourage the good in them and find joy in selfless service as Jesus did, you will discover the inner happiness and attunement with the Infinite that Paramahansaji was referring to when he said, "In every good thought is a secret home of Christ."

The universal Christ lives in us when we strive to reflect in our lives God's divine qualities. But to fully experience the reality of that infinite consciousness, we must enter the sacred temple of silent communion deep within our souls, where we can feel the transforming power of His love permeating our being. It was that inner communion with the Heavenly Father that gave Christ the strength and courage to fulfill his mission, and a love that transcended all mortal limitations. Each soul who begins to feel that divine presence within, and to see God in all, becomes a conscious part of the great light of Christ Consciousness in which Jesus lived—a light that has the power to bring ever greater harmony and goodwill into this world by drawing more and more souls into the tangible embrace of God's love.

May the perception of that divine love be God's blessing to you and your dear ones this Christmas,

Brother Chidananda

Brother Chidananda

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Self-Realization Fellowship

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"In this new year I am a new person. And I shall change my consciousness again and again until I have driven away all the darkness of ignorance and manifested the shining light of Spirit in whose image I am made."

—Paramahansa Yogananda

New Year 2018

Dear One,

As we enter the new year, filled with the joy and upliftment of the holiday season, I want to thank our spiritual family and friends for enhancing the Christmas joy felt in Gurudeva Paramahansa Yogananda's ashrams with your loving greetings from around the world. We are deeply touched by your many expressions of kindness during the holidays and throughout the year, and cherish these heartwarming reminders of the spiritual bond we share in God and Guru's love. Know that my prayers reach out to all of you, that God may bless your efforts to attain the noble goals closest to your hearts and to manifest increasingly the divine image within you.

Each year brings to us anew a wonderful opportunity to liberate within us the God-given freedom to be masters of our own destiny. We need not follow automatically the well-worn paths of ingrained, unproductive habits and trends of thinking, nor be diverted from our spiritual ideals by impulses of the senses, ego, and worldly environment. Through the power of discrimination and a will recharged by the invigorating thought of a fresh beginning in this new year, we can reset our focus and blaze new trails that will reveal the hidden potentials of our soul. Know that the past cannot hold you back nor the future intimidate you. You can choose to live consciously in the present and to go forward with trust that infinite resources are at your command.

Guruji encouraged us to set our course for the new year by introspecting and meditating to attune our consciousness with God's vast supporting consciousness, and then use His divine gifts of the power of thought and will to take charge of our lives. Clearing the mind of self-doubt, sadness over past mistakes, and any other form of negative thinking is a vital first step. Having cast out those obstacles, affirm and imprint upon your uncluttered consciousness the positive quality or goal you want to manifest or achieve. Gurudeva has told us, "You can instill any trend in your consciousness right now, provided you inject a strong thought in your mind; then your actions and whole being will obey that thought." By applying with calm, patient perseverance the activating power of the will — finding ways each day to remind yourself of the specific goal you are striving for — you will see that what you have affirmed becomes a reality.

Remember, too, that you are not alone in your efforts. When in the stillness of daily meditation you contact Him who is the Source of all power to accomplish, you will increasingly feel His power pulsing beneath your thoughts, His mighty will reinforcing your will, and His wisdom and love guiding you. Guruji has told us, "Every minute is a link between you and God." By living in that awareness, you will find a silent river of peace flowing beneath the surface of your consciousness, nourishing your whole being and your noble aspirations. Through your own inner transformation and the unfolding of your soul qualities, you will bring out the good in others and encourage them also to discover and manifest their true divine Self.

A happy new year to you and your dear ones, filled with God's love and unceasing blessings,

Brother Chidananda

Brother Chidananda

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Easter 2018

"Let this be the day of your own Christ-awakening....You can practice this resurrection every day in your life. Forget your old weaknesses and troubles. Just think: 'Christ was resurrected, and I am resurrected with him. I am no longer my old self.'"

—Paramahansa Yogananda

Dear One,

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a radiant beacon light of hope and joy for all humanity, for it brings to us assurance of the consciousness-expanding truth that each of us is an unconquerable, immortal soul, meant to cast off the bondage of mortal delusion and reflect our innately divine nature. Jesus' life and triumph over death are a call to us to resurrect our own soul freedom from the dictates of the senses and habits, and the smallness of ego-consciousness, that we might live as he did, in the infinite light and unconditional love of the universal Christ Consciousness.

Within each of us is the urge to unfold our highest potential — to feel again our native joy, limitless freedom, and omnipotence, forgotten in our involvement with *maya*-delusion. The example of Jesus, and of other exemplars of Christ Consciousness, reminds us that we can daily resurrect ourselves from the illusion of being helpless victims of the ever-changing dualities of this world. That resurrection begins from within — in the way we react to the circumstances of everyday life. What a sense of freedom we gain by resurrecting the power of our will from passive submission to the ego's impulses and choosing our course in each situation by soul-wisdom instead. And at those times when we have crosses to bear, if we look upon them not as obstacles but as opportunities to resurrect our soul's heroic qualities, we grow greatly in spiritual strength and faith.

A most beautiful transformation takes place in our consciousness as we increasingly expand our love and caring beyond the narrow boundaries of self and reach out to help others. Our guru, Paramahansa Yogananda, said: "With every kindness and every good action that you perform, you are being resurrected; and you are immediately in tune with Christ's divine consciousness." How deeply our hearts are touched by the compassion Jesus expressed. He looked beyond people's flaws and saw the God-spark in them, even in those who were inimical to him. As we too look for and strive to bring out the good in others, we are following the way he has shown to live in that unconditional, all-embracing Christ-love which is the strongest transforming power in changing ourselves, changing others, and ultimately changing the world.

God-like thoughts and actions lead toward resurrection from human to divine consciousness. But to feel fully the limitless wellspring of God-love and joy that sustained Jesus in his mission, we need to experience in the silent depths of our own souls the blissful consciousness he knew. Gurudeva has promised: "If you will try by deep meditation to get through the fog of restlessness, then you will see that you have come to the vast luminous soul kingdom of eternal happiness within. That is the resurrection I want you to experience." With all my heart I pray that this Easter may bring in a tangible way the fulfillment of his wish for you.

A blessed and joyous Easter to you and your dear ones,

Brother Chidananda

Brother Chidananda

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"Christmas is a thought of spiritual grandeur—a realization that our minds are an altar of Christ, the Universal Intelligence in all creation."

—Paramahansa Yogananda

Christmas 2018

Dear One,

Loving Christmas greetings to you, and to all of Paramahansa Yogananda's spiritual family and friends around the world. During this sacred season, may the universal Christ Consciousness, born in Jesus and in all God-united souls, unfold within your own devotion-prepared consciousness. Spiritual Christmas is more than just an outer celebration; it is a time of hope and new beginnings, when light and joy flow tangibly from the heavenly realms into receptive hearts. It brings a wonderful sense of opportunity—a renewed zeal and enthusiasm to attune ourselves with the Divine, to vitalize the stirrings of large-hearted goodness, helpfulness, and outreaching generosity that are the angelic heralds of the nascent Christ within us. May that true Christmas spirit rekindle in all humanity not just hope for peace on earth but an active consciousness of goodwill to all.

The blessed Lord Jesus, and all the Great Ones, incarnated on earth not to hold before us an unreachable goal but to awaken us to our soul's limitless potential—to show us that latent within us is the Christ Consciousness (*Kutastha Chaitanya*) that sustains the universe. Let this be a time to discover its indwelling power and light as a gift of God's grace. Expand the horizons of your opening mind and heart by dwelling on the Christ universality exemplified by Jesus. He saw the Divine in all, regardless of religious or social boundaries. In his compassion he reached out even to those who had erred and forgave those who were his enemies. There was no room for enmity in his heart, which encompassed all of God's children. And you too can expand the circle of your caring—creating day by day a heaven of peace, harmony, and understanding within and without. Begin this Christmas. Let it be a special time to reach out to others—not with material gifts alone, but with the gifts of a magnanimous heart: gifts of your time and attention, gifts of forgiveness and understanding. As our Guru said, "Whenever you do something for someone else, without any selfish motive, you have stepped into the sphere of Christ Consciousness."

Deepest motivation to expand our consciousness beyond our own needs and wants comes from the natural overflowing of a heart filled with God's infinite love. The Christ-love that permeated the life of Jesus came from that inexhaustible Source. That is why Paramahansaji urged us to take time to meditate longer and deeper in this holy season. In the sacred silence of the wall-less temple within your soul, God will come to you as joy, peace, and boundless love; and with the touch of His all-inclusive consciousness, you will feel the barriers of separation dissolve, revealing your eternal bond with Him and with other souls. Each soul even slightly illumined by that inner awakening automatically contributes to a more harmonious world. Receive in our Guru's own words his loving blessing: "May you have a very merry Christmas, and may you receive the greatest gift that anyone can wish for you—the perception of the Christ spirit in your own heart. May you feel his presence on Christmas Day and every day throughout the new year. Open your heart to receive the wonderful gift of Light."

A joyous Christmas to you and all of your loved ones,

Brother Chidananda

Brother Chidananda

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Self-Realization Fellowship

Founded in 1920 by Paramahansa Yogananda

"With the opening of the New Year, all the closed portals of limitations will be thrown open and I shall move through them to vaster fields, where my worthwhile dreams of life will be fulfilled."

—Paramahansa Yogananda

New Year 2019

Dear One,

As we enter a new year, we in Gurudeva Paramahansa Yogananda's ashrams send loving thoughts to you and all of our spiritual family and friends, in heartfelt appreciation for your expressions of divine friendship at Christmas and throughout the year. In our New Year's meditations, we are sending out special prayers that in the coming year God help you to fulfill the worthy goals closest to your heart.

Take deep within you our Guru's wonderful affirmation given above, and let your concentrated absorption of the divine power flowing through his words help you to start afresh. Let it energize your will and bring forth your soul's confidence that with God's help you can overcome all obstacles. I hope that during the Christmas meditations just past, you felt anew the limitless potential within yourself to become the kind of person you want to be. Now is an auspicious time to act upon that inspiration — infusing with new vigor your determination to convert your cherished dreams and spiritual potentials into manifested realities.

There is definite power in New Year's resolutions made in meditation or deep prayer, for they are enlivened by divine help from the superconscious mind. Paramahansaji advised focusing on one or a few worthy goals or soul qualities you especially wish to cultivate — such as calmness and even-mindedness, or kindness and understanding toward others. During your meditations in the months ahead, hold the vision of that achievement before your inner gaze and feeling in the calm receptivity produced by practice of the SRF techniques; and repeat a simple, straightforward affirmation that what you wish to achieve has become part of your being. Whenever you manifest, even in little ways, what you want to be, that visualized potential will take on increasing tangibility. And the more you cast off obstructive thoughts, replacing self-doubt with calm faith that you can succeed, the more quickly you will progress. Practice living consciously, being aware of what is deciding the course of your life: your habits, your associates and external environment, or the real you — your soul. Remember that you have the power every day, every moment, to decide what you will think and do. Choose your thoughts and actions by your soul's discrimination and power of free will; then nothing can hinder your journey to freedom.

The best resolution to make in this new year is to achieve a more constant immersion of your heart and mind in the Divine. With God's supporting omnipotence you can do anything. In the light of that inner communion, unwanted habit patterns can be dissolved; and by the transforming touch of God's love, *maya's* influence over you will ultimately be broken. You will become ruler of your thoughts and actions, and therefore of your destiny. Guruji has told us, "To be a conqueror of self is to be truly victorious — to conquer your circumscribed consciousness and expand your spiritual powers without limit. You can go as far as you want to go, past all limitations, and live a supremely victorious existence." May your efforts in this new year bring you ever closer to that supreme victory.

A blessed New Year to you and your loved ones,

Brother Chidananda

Brother Chidananda

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BROTHER CHIDANANDA, PRESIDENT
INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS: 3880 SAN RAFAEL AVENUE, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90065-3219
TEL: (323) 225-2471 • FAX: (323) 225-5088 • www.yogananda-srf.org
IN INDIA: YOGODA SATSANGA SOCIETY OF INDIA

Easter 2019

"Behold thine immortal Self resurrected with Christ in the illuminating Light of Christ Consciousness, present in every soul, every flower, every atom."

—Paramahansa Yogananda

Dear One,

The joyous Easter message of the resurrection of Jesus Christ reminds us anew of his glorious victory over every limitation of mortal life — and brings encouragement to each of us to awaken the limitless freedom, power, and joy within our own souls. As you dwell on the divine life of Jesus, may his example inspire you, and strengthen your confidence that the universal light of Christ Consciousness manifest in him is also within you. It is waiting to be resurrected from the confines of the ego, to shed the covering of ignorance accumulated in dealing with the outer world of duality and with the inner self-created environment of limiting habits and thoughts to which most persons accustom themselves.

God created our souls in the beautiful image of His love and goodness, and has given each of us the power to manifest that image in our lives. The all-inclusive consciousness of Jesus reflected perfectly that Christ-love which reaches beyond a small circle of caring to encompass all of God's children. He did not judge people by nationality or social status; nor did he shun those who had erred. Even on the cross, he sought forgiveness for his enemies. To see and respect God in all is a wonderful way to expand our human consciousness into divine consciousness. Each time we seek to understand someone whose opinions differ from our own, or express consideration of others' needs, we broaden the horizons of our minds and enlarge the compassion of our hearts. Gurudeva Paramahansa Yogananda said: "One of the greatest victories over the little self is to be sure of your capacity to be always thoughtful and loving, to be secure in the knowledge that no one can make you act differently." The world thinks that power means the ability to control others. But God-united souls like Christ have proven that there is no greater power than to control one's own consciousness in accord with God's will and His laws of love and truth. When we follow that example, we no longer need to depend for our self-esteem upon the fickle world of *maya* or be ruled by the short-sighted ego. We know the inner assurance and freedom of a calm mind and a conscience at peace. That is the consciousness in which Jesus lived.

The fullest blossoming of our immortal potential comes when, with ever-deepening yearning, we commune with God in the silent temple of the soul. Each devotional effort to touch that indwelling Divine Presence brings us closer to resurrection from human consciousness into Christ Consciousness. By feeling even a momentary contact with the all-fulfilling reality of Christ-love in our hearts, we know that there is nothing else to want or need. Whatever our outer circumstances, we find a deep security and trust within, knowing that we are in the loving hands of Him who created us in His image of immortality and joy.

May the dawn of that awareness in your soul be your blessed Easter awakening,

Brother Chidananda

Brother Chidananda

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